

CLAIMS

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1. A method for a retailer to facilitate issuance of a digital license from a licensor to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the method comprising:

10 receiving, by the retailer from the customer, payment for the license, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner; obtaining, by the retailer from the customer, customer-based information;

15 composing, by the retailer, an actual license request including the obtained customer-based information, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor; and

forwarding, by the retailer to the licensor, the actual license request.

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2. The method of claim 1 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in accordance with the license, the method comprising obtaining the customer-based information by a request directed to the DRM system of the customer.

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3. The method of claim 2 comprising obtaining the customer-based information by delivering a controller to the customer that directs the DRM system of the customer to send the customer-based information to the retailer.

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4. The method of claim 1 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in

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accordance with the license, wherein obtaining the customer-based information comprises:

5 delivering, by the retailer to the customer, a dummy package having license acquisition information containing a site identifier for an interposing site controlled by the retailer;

10 delivering, by the retailer to the customer, a controller that can control the DRM system of the customer, wherein such controller directs such DRM system to send a dummy license request for a license for the dummy package, the dummy license request being directed to the site identifier for the interposing site controlled by the retailer according to the license acquisition information in the dummy package; and

15 receiving, by the retailer at the interposing site from the customer, the dummy license request including customer-based information, and wherein composing the actual license request comprises modifying, by the retailer, the dummy license request to add the retailer-based information.

20 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the dummy license request contains a content ID identifying the dummy package, the method comprising modifying the dummy license request to change the content ID to a content ID identifying an actual package having actual content corresponding to the to-be-issued license.

25 6. The method of claim 4 comprising receiving the dummy license request including customer information comprising a customer secret.

7. The method of claim 4 comprising delivering a controller that directs the DRM system to send a license request for the dummy package by commanding that the dummy package be played.

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8. The method of claim 4 wherein delivering the controller comprises downloading such controller to the customer.

5 9. The method of claim 8 wherein delivering the controller comprises downloading such controller to the customer as part of a page such as an HTML web page.

10 10. The method of claim 4 comprising delivering, to the customer, a dummy package having no substantial content therein.

15 11. The method of claim 4 comprising delivering, to the customer, a dummy package having no corresponding license, wherein the sending of the dummy license request results at least in part from the lack of a corresponding license.

12. The method of claim 1 comprising forwarding the actual license request to a license server.

20 13. The method of claim 1 comprising composing the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

25 14. The method of claim 1 comprising composing the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a secret that proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

30 15. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving, from the customer, a selection of the content.

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16. A method for a licensor to issue a digital license to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the customer having forwarded payment for the license to a retailer, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner, the method comprising:

5 receiving, by the licensor from the retailer, an actual license request as composed by the retailer, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor;
10 and

noting, by the licensor, based on the retailer-based information, that the retailer identified thereby owes the licensor at least a portion of the forwarded payment.

15 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising preparing the license based on the customer-based information and issuing the prepared license to the customer.

18. The method of claim 16 comprising receiving the actual
20 license request including retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

19. The method of claim 16 comprising receiving the actual
license request including retailer-based information comprising a secret that
25 proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

20. A method for a licensor to respond to a license request from
an individual for a corresponding piece of digital content, the individual having
30 failed to forward payment for the license to a retailer, the method comprising:

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receiving, by the licensor from the individual, an actual license request as composed by the individual, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and failing to include retailer-based information identifying a retailer to the licensor and
5 acknowledging to the licensor that a retailer owes a portion of any received payment to the licensor; and

refusing, by the licensor, based on the lack of retailer-based information, to issue a license as requested.

10 21. The method of claim 20 further comprising directing the individual to a retailer to forward payment for a license.

22. The method of claim 20 further comprising issuing, to the individual, a relatively restrictive license as compared to the license requested.
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23. A computer having computer-executable instructions thereon for allowing a retailer to facilitate issuance of a digital license from a licensor to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the instructions comprising modules including:
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a first module receiving, by the retailer from the customer, payment for the license, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner;

a second module obtaining, by the retailer from the customer, customer-based information;

25 a third module composing, by the retailer, an actual license request including the obtained customer-based information, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor; and

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a fourth module forwarding, by the retailer to the licensor, the actual license request.

24. The computer of claim 23 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in accordance with the license, the second module obtaining the customer-based information by a request directed to the DRM system of the customer.

25. The computer of claim 24 wherein the second module obtains the customer-based information by delivering a controller to the customer that directs the DRM system of the customer to send the customer-based information to the retailer.

26. The computer of claim 23 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in accordance with the license, the second module obtaining the customer-based information comprising:

a first sub-module delivering, by the retailer to the customer, a dummy package having license acquisition information containing a site identifier for an interposing site controlled by the retailer;

a second sub-module delivering, by the retailer to the customer, a controller that can control the DRM system of the customer, wherein such controller directs such DRM system to send a dummy license request for a license for the dummy package, the dummy license request being directed to the site identifier for the interposing site controlled by the retailer according to the license acquisition information in the dummy package; and

a third sub-module receiving, by the retailer at the interposing site from the customer, the dummy license request including customer-based information, and

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the third module composing the actual license request by modifying, by the retailer, the dummy license request to add the retailer-based information.

27. The computer of claim 26 wherein the dummy license request
5 contains a content ID identifying the dummy package, the third module modifying the dummy license request to change the content ID to a content ID identifying an actual package having actual content corresponding to the to-be-issued license.

28. The computer of claim 26 wherein the first module receives
10 the dummy license request including customer information comprising a customer secret.

29. The computer of claim 26 wherein the second sub-module
15 delivers a controller that directs the DRM system to send a license request for the dummy package by commanding that the dummy package be played.

30. The computer of claim 26 wherein the second sub-module delivers the controller by downloading such controller to the customer.

20 31. The computer of claim 30 wherein the second sub-module delivers the controller by downloading such controller to the customer as part of a page such as an HTML web page.

25 32. The computer of claim 26 wherein the second sub-module delivers, to the customer, a dummy package having no substantial content therein.

33. The computer of claim 26 wherein the second sub-module delivers, to the customer, a dummy package having no corresponding license,

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wherein the sending of the dummy license request results at least in part from the lack of a corresponding license.

34. The computer of claim 23 wherein the fourth module forwards
5 the actual license request to a license server.

35. The computer of claim 23 wherein the third module composes
10 the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

36. The computer of claim 23 wherein the third module composes
15 the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a secret that proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

37. The computer of claim 23 further comprising a fifth module
receiving, from the customer, a selection of the content.

38. A computer having computer-executable instructions thereon
20 for allowing a licensor to issue a digital license to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the customer having forwarded payment for the license to a retailer, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner, the instructions comprising modules including:

a first module receiving, by the licensor from the retailer, an
25 actual license request as composed by the retailer, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor; and

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a second module noting, by the licensor, based on the retailer-based information, that the retailer identified thereby owes the licensor at least a portion of the forwarded payment.

5 39. The computer of claim 38 further comprising a third module preparing the license based on the customer-based information and issuing the prepared license to the customer.

10 40. The computer of claim 38 wherein the first module receives the actual license request including retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

15 41. The computer of claim 38 wherein the first module receives the actual license request including retailer-based information comprising a secret that proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

20 42. A computer having computer-executable instructions thereon for allowing a licensor to respond to a license request from an individual for a corresponding piece of digital content, the individual having failed to forward payment for the license to a retailer, the instructions comprising modules including:

25 a first module receiving, by the licensor from the individual, an actual license request as composed by the individual, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and failing to include retailer-based information identifying a retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that a retailer owes a portion of any received payment to the licensor; and

30 a second module refusing, by the licensor, based on the lack of retailer-based information, to issue a license as requested.

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43. The computer of claim 42 further comprising a third module directing the individual to a retailer to forward payment for a license.

5 44. The computer of claim 42 further comprising a third module issuing, to the individual, a relatively restrictive license as compared to the license requested.

10 45. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions thereon for allowing a retailer to facilitate issuance of a digital license from a licensor to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the instructions comprising modules including:

15 a first module for receiving, by the retailer from the customer, payment for the license, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner;

 a second module for obtaining, by the retailer from the customer, customer-based information;

20 a third module for composing, by the retailer, an actual license request including the obtained customer-based information, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor; and

25 a fourth module for forwarding, by the retailer to the licensor, the actual license request.

 46. The medium of claim 45 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in accordance with the license, the second module obtaining the customer-based information by a request directed to the DRM system of the customer.

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47. The medium of claim 46 wherein the second module obtains the customer-based information by delivering a controller to the customer that directs the DRM system of the customer to send the customer-based information to the retailer.

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48. The medium of claim 45 wherein the customer has a digital rights management (DRM) system to ensure that the content is rendered in accordance with the license, the second module obtaining the customer-based information comprising:

10 a first sub-module for delivering, by the retailer to the
customer, a dummy package having license acquisition information containing a
site identifier for an interposing site controlled by the retailer;

a second sub-module for delivering, by the retailer to the customer, a controller that can control the DRM system of the customer, wherein such controller directs such DRM system to send a dummy license request for a license for the dummy package, the dummy license request being directed to the site identifier for the interposing site controlled by the retailer according to the license acquisition information in the dummy package; and

a third sub-module for receiving, by the retailer at the
20 interposing site from the customer, the dummy license request including
customer-based information, and

the third module composing the actual license request by modifying, by the retailer, the dummy license request to add the retailer-based information.

25 49. The medium of claim 48 wherein the dummy license request contains a content ID identifying the dummy package, the third module modifying the dummy license request to change the content ID to a content ID identifying an actual package having actual content corresponding to the to-be-issued license.

50. The medium of claim 48 wherein the first module receives the dummy license request including customer information comprising a customer secret.

5 51. The medium of claim 48 wherein the second sub-module delivers a controller that directs the DRM system to send a license request for the dummy package by commanding that the dummy package be played.

10 52. The medium of claim 48 wherein the second sub-module delivers the controller by downloading such controller to the customer.

15 53. The medium of claim 52 wherein the second sub-module delivers the controller by downloading such controller to the customer as part of a page such as an HTML web page.

20 54. The medium of claim 48 wherein the second sub-module delivers, to the customer, a dummy package having no substantial content therein.

25 55. The medium of claim 48 wherein the second sub-module delivers, to the customer, a dummy package having no corresponding license, wherein the sending of the dummy license request results at least in part from the lack of a corresponding license.

30 56. The medium of claim 45 wherein the fourth module forwards the actual license request to a license server.

57. The medium of claim 45 wherein the third module composes the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

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58. The medium of claim 45 wherein the third module composes the actual license request to include retailer-based information comprising a secret that proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

59. The medium of claim 45 further comprising a fifth module for receiving, from the customer, a selection of the content.

60. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions thereon for allowing a licensor to issue a digital license to a customer for a corresponding piece of digital content, the customer having forwarded payment for the license to a retailer, the payment to be shared with the licensor in a pre-determined manner, the instructions comprising modules including:

a first module for receiving, by the licensor from the retailer, an actual license request as composed by the retailer, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and including retailer-based information identifying the retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that the retailer owes a portion of the received payment to the licensor; and

a second module for noting, by the licensor, based on the retailer-based information, that the retailer identified thereby owes the licensor at least a portion of the forwarded payment.

61. The medium of claim 60 further comprising a third module for preparing the license based on the customer-based information and issuing the prepared license to the customer.

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62. The medium of claim 60 wherein the first module receives the actual license request including retailer-based information comprising a retailer ID identifying the retailer.

5 63. The medium of claim 60 wherein the first module receives the actual license request including retailer-based information comprising a secret that proves to the licensor that the retailer actually authorized issuance of a license by such licensor.

10 64. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions thereon for allowing a licensor to respond to a license request from an individual for a corresponding piece of digital content, the individual having failed to forward payment for the license to a retailer, the instructions comprising modules including:

15 a first module for receiving, by the licensor from the individual, an actual license request as composed by the individual, the actual license request including customer-based information obtained from the customer, and failing to include retailer-based information identifying a retailer to the licensor and acknowledging to the licensor that a retailer owes a portion of
20 any received payment to the licensor; and

 a second module for refusing, by the licensor, based on the lack of retailer-based information, to issue a license as requested.

25 65. The medium of claim 64 further comprising a third module for directing the individual to a retailer to forward payment for a license.

 66. The medium of claim 64 further comprising a third module for issuing, to the individual, a relatively restrictive license as compared to the license requested.

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